

Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 NEA-10 ISO-00 CIAE-00 PM-05 H-01
INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 SSO-00
INRE-00 NSCE-00 HA-05 MCT-01 ACDA-12 IO-13 /101 W
-----035838 091725Z /50

O P 091617Z MAR 78

FM AMEMBASSY KINSHASA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8594

INFO AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY PARIS PRIORITY

DIA WASHDC PRIORITY

USIA WASHDC PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY BANGUI

AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY BRAZZAVILLE POUCH

AMEMBASSY BUJUMBURA

AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM

AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM

AMEMBASSY KIGALI

AMEMBASSY LIBREVILLE

AMEMBASSY LUSAKA

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMCONSUL LUBUMBASHI

AMCONSUL BUKAVU POUCH

AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

C O N F I D E N T I A L KINSHASA 2299

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS, PINR, CG

SUBJECT: ZAIRIAN COUP PLOT TRIAL: FIRST DAY

REF: KINSHASA 2213 AND PREVIOUS

1. SUMMARY: FIRST DAY OF TRIAL OF ACCUSED COUP PLOTTERS HEARD

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TESTIMONY FROM ALLEGED KINSHASA ORGANIZER, MAJOR KALUME, AND FIVE OTHERS. TRIAL TO DATE HAS PROVIDED LITTLE INFORMATION ABOUT ALLEGED PLANS TO CONDUCT CAMPAIGN OF URBAN TERRORISM. TESTIMONY HAS TENDED TO ESTABLISH EXISTENCE OF SOME RATHER INEPT PLOTTING BY MILITARY OFFICERS TO OVERTHROW MOBUTU GOVERNMENT. FOREIGN INVOLVEMENT HAS NOT BEEN EMPHASIZED, BUT TESTIMONY HAS INCLUDED ALLEGED INVOLVEMENT OF AN UNIDENTIFIED AMERICAN DIPLOMAT IN

BELGIUM, AND ALLEGATIONS AGAINST A BELGIAN DIPLOMAT UNTIL RECENTLY IN KINSHASA AND A FORMER LIBYAN AMBASSADOR TO ZAIRE. END SUMMARY

2. MEDIA LISTS NAMES OF 82 OF 91 ALLEGED PLOTTERS. SINCE AT LEAST THREE OF THESE ARE CIVILIANS LIVING IN BELGIUM, IT IS UNCLEAR HOW MANY ARE ACTUALLY STANDING TRIAL AND HOW MANY ARE BEING TRIED IN ABSENTIA. NAMES OF ALLEGED MILITARY PLOTTERS INCLUDE 4 FULL COLONELS, 7 LIEUTENANT COLONELS, 16 MAJORS, 16 CAPTAINS, 10 LIEUTENANTS AND 9 OF LOWER RANK. MAJORITY OF THESE OFFICERS ARE FROM EAST KASAI AND SHABA. MOST HAVE BEEN TRAINED IN BELGIUM AND ARE GENERALLY CONSIDERED TO BE "INTELLECTUAL" STAFF OFFICERS. PREVIOUS REPORTS THAT MILITARY HELD ADMINISTRATIVE POSTS AND DID NOT COMMAND TROOPS SEEM TO BE BORNE OUT.

3. AN EMBASSY OFFICER HAS ATTENDED TRIAL, AND A RATHER FULL ACCOUNT OF PROCEEDINGS THUS FAR HAS APPEARED IN LOCAL PRESS. MAJOR KALUME HAMBA, WHO HAS BEEN CHIEF INSPECTOR OF MILITARY PRISONS, HAS ADMITTED IN HIS TESTIMONY THAT HE ESTABLISHED CONTACT WITH THE MOUVEMENT D'ACTION POUR LA RESURRECTION DU CONGO (MARC) LEADERS MONGUYA AND KANYONGA IN BELGIUM. AT THAT TIME HE WAS INFORMED OF MONGUYA'S PLANS FOR OVERTHROWING MOBUTU ALONG LINES REFTEL. MONGUYA ALLEGEDLY PUT HIM IN CONTACT WITH NIJSKENS, DIPLOMAT THEN ASSIGNED TO THE BELGIAN EMBASSY IN KINSHASA, WHO WAS TO PASS CORRESPONDENCE AND FUNDS BETWEEN MONGUYA AND KALUME VIA THE DIPLOMATIC POUCH. KALUME ADMITTED OBTAINING THREE CASES OF GRENADES, TO BE USED TO ACHIEVE "MONGUYA'S POLITICAL CONFIDENTIAL

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OBJECTIVES," FROM CAPTAIN FUNDI, WHO WAS IN CHARGE OF MUNITIONS AT MBANZA-NGUNGU MILITARY BASE. HE ALSO SAID HE CONTACTED THE THEN LIBYAN AMBASSADOR WHO ALLEGEDLY HAD INSTRUCTIONS FROM COL. QUADAFI TO BE OF ASSISTANCE TO THE COUP PLOTTERS. KALUME ALSO CLAIMED THAT AN AMERICAN DIPLOMAT (UNIDENTIFIED) ATTENDED MEETING IN BELGIUM WHERE PLOTTING TOOK PLACE IN 1977 (SEPT-1977).

4. ALL OF KALUME'S ASSOCIATES INTERROGATED DURING THE FIRST DAY OF THE TRIAL DENIED DIRECT INVOLVEMENT IN THE COUP PLOT. MAJOR PANUMBULE CLAIMED TO BE GATHERING INFORMATION ON THE PLOT AS A ROUTINE ASPECT OF HIS RESPONSIBILITIES AS DEPUTY CHIEF OF MILITARY INTELLIGENCE. CIT. MAKANI, A ONE-TIME ASSISTANT TO MONGUYA IN ZAIRE'S TERRITORIAL ADMINISTRATION, ADMITTED SERVING AS INTERMEDIARY FOR MAIL BETWEEN KALUME, NIJSKENS AND MONGUYA.

5. CIT. MBANGAMA, AN INSPECTOR AT THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE, CLAIMED TO HAVE BECOME INVOLVED OUT OF INTELLECTUAL CURIOSITY, AND TO HAVE BEEN ON THE VERGE OF REPORTING DETAILS OF THE PLOT TO THE AUTHORITIES WHEN ARRESTED. CAPT. FUNDI ADMITTED TURNING OVER TO KALUME THREE CASES OF GRENADES, BUT INSISTED THAT HE WAS TOLD THE GRENADES WERE TO BE USED TO KILL FISH TO FEED MILITARY PRISONERS. ADJUTANT MBEKA DENIED THE

CHARGE OF FRAUDULENTLY REMOVING AMMUNITION FROM SUPPLIES AT THE MBANZA-NGUNGU MILITARY BASE, CLAIMING HE ONLY FOLLOWED ORDERS ISSUED BY CAPT. FUNDI.

6. COMMENT: AS TRIALS ENTERED THEIR SECOND DAY ON MARCH 9, TESTIMONY HAD BEEN TAKEN FROM ONLY 6 OF AT LEAST 82 DEFENDANTS. FOREIGN INVOLVEMENT IN THE PLOT HAS NOT YET BEEN EMPHASIZED PARTICULARLY BY PRESS OR MILITARY COURT. LITTLE INFORMATION HAS BEEN DEVELOPED CONCERNING ALLEGED CAMPAIGN OF TERRORISM. ON THE BASIS OF EVIDENCE PRESENTED THUS FAR, THE ALLEGED "COUP PLOT" APPEARS NEVER TO HAVE MOVED BEYOND AN INITIAL, RATHER INCOMPETENT PLANNING STAGE.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PLOTS, TRIALS, COURT PROCEEDINGS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 09 mar 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978KINSHA02299
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780106-0649
Format: TEL
From: KINSHASA
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780388/aaaacwtb.tel
Line Count: 128
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 2affd8ca-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION AF
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 78 KINSHASA 2213
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 18 apr 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 3389686
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: ZAIRIAN COUP PLOT TRIAL: FIRST DAY
TAGS: PINS, PINR, CG
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/2affd8ca-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014